

## **Australian Garden History Society**

**40<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference - held at Te Papa Tongarewa 25-26  
October 2019**

### **Reflections on the Conference by Gillian Deane**

**In asking me to reflect on the Conference, your Committee asked me to speak briefly about the appropriateness of the Conference theme; how members may have benefitted from the Conference, particularly from an educational perspective; the value of holding the Conference offshore for the first time in 40 years; and a possible future for an hypothetical Australian and New Zealand Garden History Society.**

**Given the range and insightfulness of the presentations I would think we would all agree that “Expanding Horizons” was a marvelous theme for the Conference. We learnt about Maori and Chinese and Pakeha and Missionary and women’s gardening, about the botanical discoveries of Cook and Banks, about the earliest paintings of New Zealand flora; about the proliferation of those native trees and plants today; about the treasures old and new preserved for our enrichment; about early gardening and gardening today; all in all encompassing a breadth of historical garden knowledge that is exciting and illuminating.**

**So, our horizons have been expanded and in that process we have all learnt so much more about the astounding diversity and depth of our plant heritage.**

**We hope that the New Zealand perspective of this Conference, the first to be held outside Australia, has been both enjoyable and of benefit to our Australian cousins. The educational aspects of the Conference have been wonderfully knowledge enhancing.**

**As our Chairman, Richard Heathcote, reminded us in the latest Society Journal, the AGHS must remain dedicated to promoting awareness and conservation of significant gardens and important cultural landscapes in Australia.**

**Holding this special 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary Conference in New Zealand, and promoting the discussion of people, plants and places, to quote your Chair, by no means diminished the importance of this fundamental role. Instead, it will help widen our thinking and our knowledge. By sharing our garden histories, I hope this enhances the role and influence of the Society. Indeed, if New Zealand could be encompassed within a broader Society that could have great merit. Those New Zealanders who are here today would certainly like to explore that possibility.**

**The huge importance of understanding our historical garden and plant treasures and their preservation for the future requires great vigilance, much research and firm commitment. A Society such as ours has an important role to play in this. If that role could be extended to encompass also New Zealand that would be splendid.**

**Holding a conference offshore requires much additional work from those who form our Committee and those who help them with the organization of the Conference. On behalf of all participants could I extend our warmest appreciation and gratitude to the Chairman and the Committee members and to my fellow speakers.**

**The Conference has facilitated new learnings and has stimulated us to renew our commitment to the enhancement and preservation of our outstanding plant and garden heritage, on this occasion not just in Australia where you normally meet, but also in New Zealand.**

**Thank you for being here at Te Papa, our place, and for generously sharing your knowledge and your enthusiasm with us. We have renewed old friendships, made new friendships, and enhanced our love affairs with gardens and trees and plants. Long may that continue.**

**Gillian Deane**

**Wellington 26 October 2019**